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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON DEBT FORGIVENESS, NICARAGUA AND
OAS, JULY 12, 2005

1. On 07/12 the Tegucigalpa-based moderate daily "El Herald" carried an op-ed by Gaspar Vallecillo Molina entitled "Debt Forgiveness and Poverty." "Since an important debt forgiveness has been talked about an infinity of opinions arose."

"If we don't have enough to pay off the debt how are we going to give to the poor what we don't have? It is doubtful that governmental corruption increases in yesterday, today and tomorrow because nobody is fooling themselves and we know that nothing has been done or never will be for the poor."

"I have decided to call for a big national dialogue to assure that the amount of funds should be used to reduce poverty."

"I'm convinced that the debt forgiveness won't relieve poverty while the poor are still antipatriotic. On a scale from 1 to 10 corruption in Honduras is a 7. So what do you think, Ricardo? [President Maduro]"

"Poverty is condemned, not forgiven its debt and the corrupt are without punishment."

2. The Tegucigalpa-based liberal daily "La Tribuna" published an op-ed by Rafael Alcantara entitled "Debt Forgiveness is not the Solution." "A lot of contemporary politicians and civil and religious associations are glad for the partial debt forgiveness promoted in past governments and achieved in the present one. But first we have to evaluate the pros and cons of this debt forgiveness."

"First, Honduras has been and remains a Republic in which the institutions are weak and there is a great possibility that the money will end up in the hands of corruption."

"On the other hand, now that we are considered by the international community as a country that cannot pay its debt we are also considered not suitable to receive more loans. So, from now on we have to learn to intelligently handle the national budget. So our future is not as flattering as we thought because we no longer have access to more loans and we are submerged in a 'corruptcracy.'"

"So debt forgiveness is not the solution. The initial solution is that the wealthy nations should let us 'go fishing and not give us an already cooked fish on our plates.' That is the only way that Hondurans will have an opportunity to free our nation from poverty and stop being categorized by the international community as indigents."

3. "La Tribuna" published an editorial entitled "The Knot." "For Nicaragua the only good news has been that, along with Honduras, it is one of the countries that will benefit the most from the debt relief for the 18 poor nations in the world."

"The news that has captured most of the attention of the Nicaraguan public opinion has been related to the governability crisis that affects the country. For this reason the relief coming from the G-8 summit couldn't have better timing. Despite mediation efforts by the OAS and the various attempts by the Catholic Church to end the confrontation, Congress is already in the process of holding a hearing against Mr. Enrique, who, if he loses immunity, would be indicted for alleged electoral crime and fraud in the handling of political campaign funds."

"That is the state of things in Nicaragua and more than likely that is how things will remain until the people, through elections, undo the knots and send away the creators of their misery."

Palmer